



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 June 2025

by **Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/25/3364219

Cranleigh, Wych Hill Lane, Woking GU22 0AH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Dr Gibbs against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref. is PLAN/2025/0023.
 - The development proposed is the erection of second floor side extensions, front and rear dormer windows and the insertion of sun tubes to the front elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for the erection of second floor side extensions, front and rear dormer windows and the insertion of sun tubes to the front elevation at Cranleigh, Wych Hill Lane, Woking GU22 0AH in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. PLAN/2025/0023 and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions.
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this Decision;
 - 2) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building other than as indicated on the approved plans;
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing Nos. 4017-P01 & 4017 P02b.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extensions on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. I saw on my visit that Cranleigh is a large, detached house of bespoke design set back from Wych Hill Lane on a wide plot within a linear development of other detached houses, also of individual design. Generously sized gardens and mature trees and hedges along this stretch of road provide a verdant setting for the properties and in part limit views both between the houses and to and from Wych Hill Lane.
4. The Officer's report explains that although the appeal scheme would affect the front elevation, the proposed alterations and additions would *'be in keeping with the character of the host dwellinghouse and the street scene'*. However, the Council

does take issue with the proposed rear dormer, which is considered to be of a poor design, too large, unduly dominating and incongruous.

5. I agree that the dormer would be large, albeit it would be marginally set down from the ridge and slightly set in from the sides and up from the eaves. In the case of some house designs in some contexts this would indeed be perceived as harmfully dominant with a resultant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the dwelling and its surroundings.
6. However, in the case of Cranleigh the three rooflights at the rear indicate that the roofspace is already used for habitable accommodation (bedrooms 4 & 5 and a bathroom) and, more importantly, there is a miscellany of built form and design in marked contrast to the more simple and balanced traditional architecture of the front elevation.
7. The view of the house from the back garden is one of an attached garage of traditional design and materials, with a hipped roof and timber door with small - paned glazing; the two-storey projecting gable in the centre of the building and two flat roofed single storey additions of a more contemporary style with full height glazing.
8. Accordingly, the rear of Cranleigh is not an example of a building with clean lines and symmetry where a roof alteration would harmfully affect a distinctive architectural aesthetic. And in these circumstances, I do not consider the dormer would draw the eye and be negatively perceived. I also saw that the rear of the adjoining dwellings of Glenholme and Everley Cottage also have complex rear elevations of a dominant scale, especially Glenholme, albeit in both cases without the contemporary elements.
9. For these reasons I do not find that the proposed dormer would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwellings or the adjacent buildings. Nor do I agree with the Officer's Report that the 'surrounding area' would also be affected as the rear of the appeal site is for the most part visually contained.
10. As there would be no harmful conflict with Policies CS21 and CS24 of the Woking Core Strategy 2012; the Woking Design SPD and Section 12: 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' of the National Planning Policy Framework, revised December 2024, I shall allow the appeal.
11. A condition in respect of external materials will maintain visual amenity, whilst a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans is needed for the avoidance of doubt and is in the interests of proper planning.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR